
ECONOMIC CONDITION OF THE THARU: A STUDY OF KALIKA MUNICIPALITY OF CHITWAN DISTRICT

*Chadra Prasad Dhakal, PhD**

Abstract

The study analyzes the socio-economic status of the Tharu living in Kalika municipality of Chitwan. Kalika municipality ward number 4 is the traditional home land of Tharus. This ward is the Padampur VDC which was shifted from the area of Chitwan national park (Chiriyā) to current place in 2057. The study is only limited on ward number 4 of Kalika municipality and focuses on current economic situation and the factors that play important role in to form economic status of the Tharu of Study area. The study follows the both qualitative and quantitative research design and both primary and secondary source of data were used in this study. Conclusion of this study has based on data analysis and presentation.

Keywords: *Tharu, Socio Economic, Chitwan, Nepal*

Introduction

The terms socio-economic status refers to a combination of various social and economic of rank, which is used in research studies. The term is often used to distinct social classes of a particular community. According to concise (Oxford Dictionary, 1990), socio-economic means, " to or concerned with interaction of social and economic factors". The study highlights on the economic condition of Tharus living in Kalika municipality ward no. 4 Chitwan.

Tharus are one of the indigenous people settles in the Terai region, basically the foothills of Chure and Siwanlike two lower Himalayan ranges. Nepal national population census 2011 showed that total population of the Tharu is 1,737,470 (6.6%). Like that 7.1% population covers by Tharus in Chitwan district where as total population of the district was 579,984 (279,087 male and 300,897 female) in 2011. In the context of Chiwan The Tharu is one of the oldest people of Chitwan like Darai, Bote and Chepang. Majority of the Tharu population is backward and deprived of mainstream of development. There are various myths and junctures about the origin and development of Tharu people. (Pyakurel, 1982) notes:

Tharus are an innocent, shy and relatively timid people. Some of the earliest settlement of Tharus was deep in the forest isolated from other ethnic groups. They have been exploited by government authorities in the past and still to a lesser degree are out maneuvered by the surrounding non-Tharus. Pyakural highlights the socio-economic situation of Tharus and identifies them as the

* Assistant Professor of Saraswati Multiple Campus (Humanities Faculty, Economics Department), Tribhuvan University, Nepal

members of deprived community. They have no access on modern development and live in with traditional pattern of life.

Tharus are not good in business and other economic activities. They are often in debts since the grain they produce is frequently used to brew alcoholic drinks. More clever persons from the hills will lend them money to purchase food and then continue to compound the interest. Eventually the Hillman acquires the Tharu's land and the Tharu is relegated to landless status (David, 1987).

(Bista, 1967) Mentioned about the Tharu as, "Tharu are by tradition peasant farmers. Some of them are rich farmers and few in the eastern Terai have successfully taken up business but majority of them are very hard-working tenant cultivators". Tharus have no own land and they work other land and pay something for land owner. Like that (Rajaure, 1977) mentioned, "The Tharus with slightly mongoloid features to intermarriages, which have taken place over two to three generation. He sees them as strictly Indian and no connection what so ever with the Nepalese origin. Risley and Knowles predominant among Tharus". (Guneratne, 1994) Highlights:

The most important issue acting as a catalyst for the genesis of Tharu identity has been the loss of land both a symbol of identity and the roof factor in the development of ethnic consciousness. Although the Tharus are the Indigenous people of the Terai, who cleared the forest land for cultivation for the first time, they failed to understand lost some or all of their lands due to migration through chicanery and fraud.

The Tharu is one of the ethnic communities of Nepal having separate identities. In plain area of Nepal Tharus have lived since long time. They are the first cultivators of the land and their traditional economic based on agriculture (ADB, 2017). They have own culture that is based on agriculture. In this regards (Regmi, 1999) notes, "Tharu community first times should have learned better and progressive culture from other community, probably more civilized and well cultured community. Thus, they formed the elements of their socio-culture what they have learned from others".

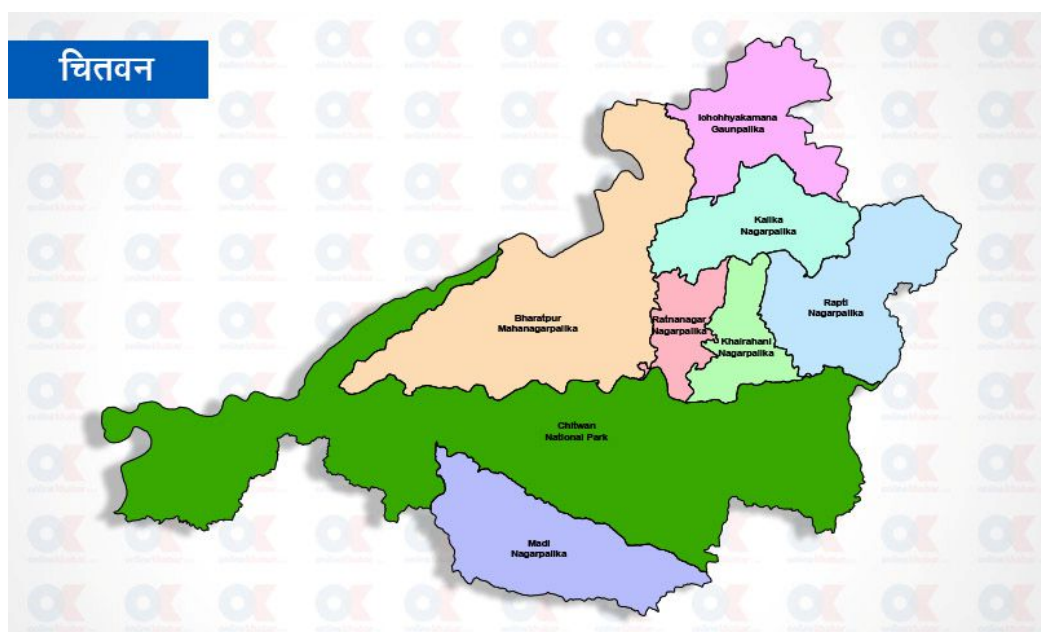
Above comments and reviews show that Tharus have their own cultural and economic identities which is based on their own values of traditional believe, however, in modern time their socio-economic status is changing.

Research Methodology

The study has been based on qualitative research paradigm and followed both descriptive and analytical research design. Qualitative information analyzed through descriptive way and quantitative data scrutinized by following analytical research design. Both secondary and primary source of data has been used for this study. Books, article and already published other materials have used as secondary source. Primary data were collected from field survey questionnaires and observation. 70 Tharus above 18 years were chosen as sample population for this study. Sample has been selected through cluster sampling method and only Kalika municipality ward no. 4 and 5 were participated in this study. Conclusion has been drawn through data analysis and perception of the researcher what he has perceived at the time of field visit.

Data Analysis and presentation

Kalika municipality ward no 4 Padampur has been selected as study area for this study. The area is located in Bagmati province 150 km far from Kathmandu. Total population of the municipality is 55734 and 3770 in ward no 4 whereas Tharu population is 1948. (Municipality Report, 2019). The study area is traditional homeland of Tharus that was shifted from Chitwan national park area to current place in 2001. Collected data and information related to economic condition of the Tharu. Various collected information were presented by using table.



Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maula_Kalika< adopted, 2021

The economy of study area is predominantly rural and agrarian. About 70 percent of economically active population is engaged in agriculture sector. Most of the people are subsistence farmers. A substantial proportion of the households do not own land. Wage earning by landless people is becoming the second major source of livelihood. Pressure of population on land has already reached to extremity. Encroachment of landless people into forestland and public land is common scene in the study area (CBS, 2011). All of these suggest controlling population growth, developing non-farm sector and improvement and diversification in agriculture for the enlistment of economy.

Agriculture

Since the area is endowed with fertile cultivable land, farming has been the main economic activity of the people; cereal crops dominate Agriculture in the area. Since the whole Terai is called the 'granary' of Nepal, the area also produces in surplus quantity. The farming system is

somewhat mixed as applied both the primitive and improved method. Farmers have been practicing chemical fertilizers, high yielding varieties and pesticide and insecticide in their farms. One of the important changes occurred in the farming system of the area is increasing use of tractor instead of bullocks. Few rice farmers in the area have owned the tractors, which are hired by other farmers. Tractors are used in several farming activities such as ploughing, puddling and leveling of farm and threshing of rice and wheat. However, other farming activities-planting, weeding and harvesting are still performed manually. The main cereal crops farmed in the area are paddy, Wheat and maize. Paddy, which is grown twice a year in lowland, has highest production and land coverage, followed by wheat and maize. Besides the cereal crops, other agricultural crops which are grown in the area are mustard, potato, pulses and leguminous crops. Since cereal crops dominate the agriculture of area, horticultural crops and vegetable are not farmed for marketing. Though they are the possible sources of income but are limited to home consumption due to the strong inclination of farmers towards cereal crops. The main fruits planted in the area are mango, bananas, jackfruits, pineapple, litchi & guavas. Cauliflower, cabbage, radish, Rayo, Brinjal, chili, potato, tomato etc, are the main vegetables cultivated in the area. Very few numbers of farmers have started growing vegetables to sell in the market.

Cropping Pattern

The types of landforms determine cropping patterns. The cropping pattern in the area is associated with three types of land forms. Ghol or lowland, Tandi or upland and Sukkha Tandi or rain fed upland. However, former two types dominate most of the land while latter one has very limited land coverage. The cropping patterns are shown in the tabular form below.

Table: 1 Cropping Pattern

Rotation of crops	Type of land
I. Paddy-Paddy	Low land
II. Paddy-wheat	Upland
III. Paddy-Pulse-Maize	Upland
IV. Paddy-Wheat-Maize	Upland
V. Maize-Mustard	Rain fed Upland

As the above table shows, the low land is associated only with paddy where it is grown twice a year. The early paddy crop is planted in the middle of March and harvested in the last of June. The next paddy crop is planted immediately after the harvest of early paddy and harvested in the first week of November. The upland, on the other hand, is associated with paddy, wheat, maize and pluses. In the upland rice is planted in the middle of July but depends fully upon the monsoon. It is harvested in the middle of March. Similarly, the maize is sown in the first week of March after the harvest of wheat, the sowing period lies in the third week of April and harvested in the middle of July. Pulse, especially, Musuro is sown just some days before the harvest of paddy in paddy land is harvested in the last of February. Mustard is sown in the first week of October and harvested in the first week of February. Multiple and intercropped are also the features of crop cultivation. Various leguminous crops are intercropped with Maize.

Livestock

Livestock is an integral component of farming system of the area. Most of the farmers have kept some animals. Holding of livestock varies with the holding of land. People keep buffaloes mainly for milk purpose. Cows are also kept for milk and for the production of oxen that were used for ploughing fields. Two milk collection centers in are operated by the ignition of farmers which bye milk and send to Dairy Development Corporation, Hetauda/ Kathmandu. The collection of milk in these three centers per day is in an average 1500 liters. Thus, milk production is becoming an important source of income earning to people. Goats, chicken, pigs, ducks are raised for meat. Landless people also kept them. Poultry rising is becoming popular in the area as some farmers have run poultry farm in an improved way.

Labor and wage

In Kalika municipality ward no 4, there are mainly two types of labor system.

- A) **Exchange labor:** This type of labor is in practice in other parts of Nepal, which is called Parma. The families who own land or cultivated on land they need extra labor in the peak load of agricultural works i. e. planting and harvesting. At that time farmers arrange exchange labor. It is family-to-family exchange system. In these exchanges no discrimination is made in value the man and women. Similarly, in the system of labor oxen and the buffaloes also involve.
- B) **Daily wages:** This kind of labor is commonly practiced in study area. Mainly the landless mistri and seasonal labor work on the basis on daily wages. Labors may be hired individually for a day work and paid on the basis of time worked. Especially in the rice plantation period the labors are hired and paid daily wages. Women labor demanded in the month of August-July is very high. Labor goes to work in a field for agricultural purpose. The wage rates in between Rs. 900-1200 per day. The skilled mistri get Rs.1500-2000 per day, which is paid for especially building construction and carpentry. The non-skilled labors get Rs. 1200 per day. And they also get one-time khaja during work time.

As the family in the principle productive unit, it is also the sole source for labor supply. All the family members contribute during planting and harvesting season. In such occasion they invite labors from relatives. They practice *begari* (exchange of labor) system. Many types of works are done by the Tharus in groups. Thus, it can be said that the Tharu community is co-operative institution.

Extension and Service Agencies:

There is an agriculture service center and veterinary center located in ward. no. 4 of the Municipality. Agriculture-technicians of this office train initiate and inspire people for improved way of farming as well as to control animal-disease and publicize improved varieties of livestock. There are banking and cooperative institution are located in ward no 4, which lends loans to people.

Industry, Tourism and Market

There are various small industries are located in the area. Small numbers of women are involved in fitting garments. Women operate a hosiery center in Padampur bazaar. Other cottage or handicrafts industries are existed in Padampur.

Chitwan is one of the main tourist areas of Nepal, however, in this area less tourists only visited. People hardly get income from tourism industries, however, some of the Tharu youths are working in Sahura.

Transportation and Communication

The area is accessible by pitch road transportation in all seasons. There is regular bus service from Narayanghat to Padampur. The means of transportation include bicycle, motorbike, tractor, auto and bus. Among them bicycle is widely used. Tractor and pickup van are used mainly in carrying the load.

Annual incomes

Most of the Tharu people's source of income is agriculture, then the laboring is their one of the sources of income. Many Tharu people rear the livestock but it can't hold their economic needs, but little of need it fills. Because of uneducated in past only little of them work in offices. Some of them have business work. Most of their business work depends on agricultural production.

Sources	No. of HHs	Percentage
Agriculture	34	48.57
Laboring	16	22.85
Services	9	12.85
Business	3	4.28
Live stocks	8	11.42
Total	70	100

Source: Field survey 2021

Above table shows the distribution of income sources. 48.57% Tharu people's source of income is agriculture, 22.85% from laboring, 12.85% depend on services, only 4.28% of Tharu people's source of income is business and 11.42% people's income source is livestock. With this analysis of the table, we can say the income source of Tharu people of study area is not so good because most of their income source is not securing. Only that people are secure who have service rest of others source depends on other issues.

Conclusion

The Tharus of that area are endogenous in Chitwan district they have own language and cultural practices. They are localizing in a particular area, from which it derives its name Chitaune Tharu. They have long history in that area. They are living from several centuries ago in that community. Now, cultural assimilation is started with the Hindu caste society in their community. Tharu is one of the indigenous tribal groups of that area. They have their own tradition, language, customs, spirits, norms, belief, values, religion and culture. Traditionally, they were depended upon the agriculture that was only for subsistence their life. Due to low level of agricultural production and small sizes of land holding they have to depend on other economic activities such as animal husbandry, wages labor, fishing, junior technicians etc. for their survival.

They are simple, honest, hardworking and uneducated. They are dominated in all sphere of life by high caste. The rapid development of education, health, transportation, mass communication, migration of hill people in that area effect of their culture.

There is a division of labor among the family members. They all work honestly according to their capacity. Men, and women have their tasks based on tradition. Aged persons and children are given light works. Some works are given according to sex difference. For plugging, hunting, building houses are done by men while women do works like preparing food, cleaning home making ceramic pots etc. some tasks are performed together.

I found good cooperation among people. For example, Parma systems among them, in this system farmer help each other during cultivation without taking (giving) wages but they feed whole day meal.

By the interaction with the people of other groups, a continuous change is occurring in their socio-economic lives. For example, most of them changed their traditional dress patterns and now they have started to wear modern types of dresses like waistcoats, shirts, pants and shoes by male and wear saris, maxis, lungi, cholo, by women and girls wear kurtha, suit and frocks.

Tharus social life of the study area have undergone some significant changes. The responsible factors to the change are; economic, migration, education, technology, physical facilities, social organization, modernization, Sanskritization, Nepalization, westernization, deforestation, industrialization, Hindu influence development of transportation, urbanization, industrialization and communication are also responsible for change.

Recommendation

Road transportation and market facilities are good in study area. So, there is a good probability of commercial vegetable farming, which is rarely found there. Farmers should use organic/compost fertilizers to decrease soil degradation. Farmers should be motivated towards commercial vegetable and fruit farming. They are not involved in enterprising works. Small-scale enterprises and involvement in alternative income generating activities can uplift the economic status of the community people. Most of the people are rearing animals. So, there is a good scope of dairy business within the Municipality. Saving and credit group members can utilize their financial resource in income generating activities. For the landless households, government or local

development organizations should support in installing community toilets and hand pumps. Proper drainage system should be installed in the community to avoid possible diseases and environmental safety. The youth of Tharu community are unemployed due to lack of occupational. The plan makers should run this type of training such as fish farming, poultry farming, beekeeping, carpentry, animal husbandry, textile, about their material culture etc.

References:

- ADB. (2017). *Policy on Gender and Development-Nepal*. Asian Development Bank.
- Bista, D. B. (1967). *Sabai Jatiko Phoolbari*. Kathmandu: Sajha Prakashan.
- CBS. (2011). *Population Census*. Kathmandu: Central Bureau of Statistics.
- David, S. (1987). *Poverty in Tharu Community*. Kathmandu.
- Guneratne, A. (1994). *The Tharu of Chitwan: Ethnicity, class and the state in Nepal*. University of Chicago, Chicago.
- Municipality Report. (2019). *Municipality Report*. Chitawan: Kalika Municipality.
- Oxford Dictionary. (1990).
- Pyakurel, K. (1982). *Ethnicity and Rural Development: A sociological study of four*. Kathmandu, Nepal: Tatna Putak.
- Rajaure, D. (1977). *Anthropological study of the Tharus of Dang-Deukhuri*. Kathmandu: Tatna Pustak.
- Regmi, R. R. (1999). *Dimensions of Nepali Society and Culture*. Kathmandu: SAAN.
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maula_Kalika< adopted, 2021